Devotional of Saint Philomena

Pax tecvm Filvmena!

Virgin, Martyr, Celestial Princess

Tender Spouse of Christ Jesus

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⚓🌸 **Pax tecvm Filvmena!** 🌿🏹

"Peace be with you, Philomena!"

Part I - Prayers

Devotion of the 3 Creeds

A very powerful prayer beloved by St. Philomena,
taught to the Servant of God Sister Maria Luisa of Jesus

- I greet you, Philomena, Virgin and Martyr of Jesus Christ, and I ask you to pray to God for the **righteous**, so that they may remain in His justice and grow daily from virtue to virtue. – *Creed*.

- I greet you, Philomena, Virgin and Martyr of Jesus Christ, and I ask you to pray to God for **sinners**, so that they may be converted and live the life of grace. – *Creed*.

- I greet you, Philomena, Virgin and Martyr of Jesus Christ, and I ask you to pray to God for **heretics and unbelievers**, so that they may come to the true Church and serve the Lord in spirit and in truth. – *Creed*.

🙏*Glory be*(x3) (to the Most Holy Trinity, in thanksgiving for the favors granted to such an illustrious virgin, martyr, and heroine of the Gospel)

👑 *Hail, Holy Queen* (to Our Lady of Sorrows, in gratitude for the supreme fortitude obtained for her during her many cruel martyrdoms)

Greeting to Saint Philomena

O glorious Virgin and Martyr, so beloved by God, Saint Philomena, I rejoice with you for the great power He has bestowed upon you for the glorification of His Holy Name, for the edification of the Church, and in honor of the merits of your life and your death.

I am glad to see you so exalted, so pure, so generous, so faithful to Jesus Christ and to His Gospel, and so magnificently rewarded by Him in Heaven and on earth.

Drawn by your example in practicing solid virtues and filled with hope as I contemplate the reward granted to your merits, I resolve to imitate you by fleeing from evil and perfectly fulfilling the commandments of God.

Help me, then, O great saint, by your powerful intercession.

Obtain for me, above all, an inviolate purity, a fortitude capable of resisting every temptation, a great generosity that refuses God no sacrifice, and a love

as strong as death for the faith of Jesus Christ, for the Holy Catholic Church, and for the Supreme Pontiff, the common father of all the faithful.

- I salute you, O innocent Philomena, who, out of love for Jesus, preserved the lily of virginity immaculate.
- I salute you, O illustrious Philomena, who so generously poured out your blood in defense of the faith.
- I salute you, O heavenly Philomena, ark of salvation, who performed so many and such great wonders. *Amen*.

Supplication to Saint Philomena

100-Day Indulgence – Imprimatur: M. R. Camerlengo, O.F.M. † Bishop of Nola

Prostrated at your feet, O great and glorious Saint, I come to present to you my fervent prayer; receive it kindly and obtain for me the graces I need.

Saint Philomena, pray for me. – *Glory*.

🤲 My heart is troubled. I strongly feel the blows of pain. Misfortune oppresses me. I lack, therefore, your help; assist me and hear my prayer.

Saint Philomena, pray for me. – *Glory*.

🤲 Weary and without comfort, deprived of hope, alone and oppressed by tribulations, I hope to be heard by you.

Saint Philomena, pray for me. – *Glory*.

🤲 I recognize that my serious sins were the cause of so many misfortunes. Obtain for me forgiveness from Jesus and enfold me in holy love.

Saint Philomena, pray for me. – *Glory*.

🤲 Return, O Saint Philomena, a glance over my home and my family, cast a sweet smile upon your faithful devotees, dry everyone's tears, infuse in my heart a ray of hope, give peace and salvation to all, and be our providence.

Saint Philomena, pray for me. – *Glory*.

🤲 See how many graces I need and do not abandon me. You who are powerful with God, remove desolation from me. Give peace to my soul, protect me from dangers, and deliver me from the Lord's punishments; bless my home, my family, your faithful devotees, and obtain for me the grace I need (ask for grace).

Glorious Saint Philomena do not abandon me and pray for me. – *Glory*.

🏹 *Through your sufferings, obtain for me God's mercy.* (x3)

Prayer of St. Philomena as Advocate

O most chaste Virgin, O undefeated Martyr of Jesus Christ, like Him, scourged by her tormentors. Saint Philomena, behold me prostrated in body and soul before you, whom I choose as my loving advocate, that I may be worthy of your intercession with the Most High, for my spiritual and temporal benefit.

I know well that you enjoy the highest favor with God and the Most Holy Virgin, which ensures that nothing is denied to you, no grace you ask for is withheld, as proven by the innumerable miracles continuously performed by the Omnipotent and Merciful God wherever your holy name, Philomena, is invoked.

He, by His most wise providence, chose you to be our hope, our refuge, and our aid in times of affliction and

despair.

You are our help in this troubled age.

I bless and glorify the Lord for the glory and power with which He crowns you today.

Protect me, my beloved little saint, and let me feel the effects of your immense charity, granting me the grace that I so urgently need (to ask for grace).

O God, be eternally praised and blessed in Your Saints. Saint Philomena, be my help. *Amen*.

– *Our Father and 3 Hail Marys* (in honor of the blood of the Martyr)

Prayer to Saint Philomena

Written by the Venerable Servant of God Pauline-Marie Jaricot

O Saint Philomena, beloved daughter of the Queen of Heaven, the nations acclaim you for the great number of graces you grant to all.

The remembrance of your name revives the sweetest hope in souls.

Most amiable Saint, show us your power and come to our aid.

O generous Virgin and intrepid Martyr, grant that, by meditating on the mysteries of Faith like our august Mother, we may remain, like you, faithful to Jesus until the hour of our death. *Amen.*

Prayer at the Feet of St. Philomena

O Saint Martyr Philomena, at your feet, full of trust, I ask you: hear me, bless me, console me!

Deign, O great Saint, to present to our God, who made you strong in martyrdom, the supplication I entrust to you (to ask for grace).

Yes, I have the firm conviction that, through the ignominy you endured, through your sufferings, through your death, united to the merits of the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ, you will obtain for me what I ask, if it is for the greater glory of God.

Saint Philomena, Virgin and Martyr, who reign in glory, pray for us.

– Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory.

Saint Philomena, example of strength and perseverance in faith, pray for us!

Novena to Saint Philomena

Composed by Saint John Mary Vianney, the Curé of Ars

- *Act of Contrition*
- *Initial Prayer for Each Day of the Novena*
- *Daily Meditation and Purpose*
- *Recitation of the Chaplet*
- *Litany*
- *Final Prayer*
- *Prayer of Consecration* (for the feast days of St. Philomena, after receiving the Holy Eucharist)
- *Act of Consecration* (to be prayed daily after your consecration)

Act of Contrition

Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, my Creator and Redeemer: because You are who You are, supremely good and worthy of being loved above all things, and because I adore and love You, it grieves my entire heart to have offended You; were it not for Your clemency, compassion, and patience, because

of my obstinacy in sin, I would lose Heaven and deserve Hell. Helped by the aid of Your divine grace, I firmly propose to amend myself and never to offend You again; I ask You and hope to attain the forgiveness of my sins by Your infinite mercy. *Amen.*

Initial Prayer

Glorious Virgin and Martyr, so beloved by God, Saint Philomena, I rejoice with you and with the power that God has given you for the glory of His name, for the edification of His Church, and to honor the merits of your life and your death.

I delight in contemplating you so pure, so generous, so faithful to Jesus Christ and to His Gospel, so magnificently rewarded in Heaven and on earth.

Drawn by your examples in the practice of solid virtues, filled with hope in light of the rewards granted by your merits, I resolve to follow you in fleeing from all evils and in committing to do everything that God asks of me.

Help me, O great Saint, with your powerful intercession.

Obtain for me, above all, an inviolate purity forever; a soul's strength always invincible to all attacks; a generosity that does not refuse any sacrifice for God; and a love so strong that it does not retreat before death for the Faith of Jesus Christ, for the Holy

Roman Church, and for the Supreme Pontiff, the common Father of all the faithful, Shepherd of Shepherds, Vicar of Jesus Christ throughout the world.

To these favors that I ask of you, with all the fervor of my soul, I add, Saint Philomena, a new grace which I also fully trust to obtain through your powerful intercession: (state the grace you seek, with simplicity, confidence, and humility).

This so good God for whom you shed your blood giving your life; this so good God who performed so many miracles in us and through your intercession; this so good God who loved us to death, even willing to give Himself to me in the Eucharist… will not refuse to hear your prayers on behalf of my requests. I hope, I place all my trust in Him and in you. *Amen.*

Meditation for the 1st Day

1- Consider that Saint Philomena was a Virgin... Virgin in the midst of the world... Virgin despite persecution... Virgin even unto death... What a model! Can I contemplate her without confusion?... What will be the remedy?...

2- Humble yourselves many times for what confounded you, considering her virgin purity.

3- Attend Holy Mass in her honor and visit an image of her, if possible.

Meditation for the 2nd Day

1- Consider that Saint Philomena was and did not cease to be a Virgin... Because she knew how to mortify the corrupt desires of the flesh... To preserve, in the use of her senses, the modesty of Jesus Christ... To keep herself away from a deceitful world and from dangerous occasions... Have you imitated her in all of this? What are the sources of your temptations... of your weaknesses... of your restlessness... of your falls... Seek to analyze them.

2- Flee from what has caused you harm, practice what you have unfortunately neglected regarding chastity.

Meditation for the 3rd Day

1- Consider that Saint Philomena preserved and increased her love for Virginity through prayer, an abundant source of supernatural life... through the Sacraments, by which the soul is carried in the Blood of Jesus Christ and nourishes itself with the Sacred Body, the divine seed of Christian virginity... with the remembrance that her members were the members of the Body of Jesus Christ and that her body was the temple of the Holy Spirit... Do you perhaps not have the same means?... What use do you make of them?...

2- Increase in fervor in all your prayers... From time to time say to yourself: my members are those of Jesus Christ... the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Meditation for the 4th Day

1- Consider that Saint Philomena was a Martyr... who had to suffer... suffer greatly... suffer until death, and that in these torments she showed insurmountable patience... Within you suffering and patience are inseparably linked... Many times you have to suffer... suffer a little... never die as a consequence. Where does so much weakness come from?... Do you perhaps not want to give it a remedy?... What means do you choose therefore?

2- Suffer with patience the few pains, contrarieties, and penalties that the Lord wishes to send us today.

Meditation for the 5th Day

1- Consider that Saint Philomena suffered martyrdom for Jesus Christ... They wanted to take away her faith... they wanted to make her violate her baptismal vows... to induce her to follow the examples of idolaters or apostates... And what do they desire from you, on so many occasions, the devil, the world, the flesh, and your own heart, if not similar infidelities?... These reduce to the offense of God... Are it not perhaps the vain fears that now make you neglect your duties and betray your faith?... O God, what shameful lukewarmness! Finally recover courage.

2- Have you overcome any human respect... Occasionally say to yourself: It is better to please God than to please men.

Meditation for the 6th Day

1- Consider that Saint Philomena, dying for Jesus Christ, had to put into practice this maxim of the Savior: “Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me” (Matthew 10:38-39)... She did not hesitate... She sacrificed everything, even as blood and nature raised their voices; in less difficult occasions, would we show ourselves worthy of Christ? If ever a choice arises between God and creatures, between grace and nature, between the love of God and affections for creatures, whom shall we prefer?... Oh!, let us no longer fall away in the future from our dignity as children of God and disciples of Jesus Christ.

2- Let us strive this day to please only God, or creatures only by God.

Meditation for the 7th Day

1- Consider that St. Philomena, dying for Jesus Christ, had to tolerate the mockery, sarcasm, and insults from her persecutors, her tormentors, and most of the spectators of her suffering... She was no less generous, no less constant, no less joyful in the public confession of her faith... If the world offers you to drink from a similar cup, will you have enough courage to swallow its bitterness with equal feelings? Oh! What do their mockeries, despises, and the most unjust and bloodiest persecutions matter?... Can one ever be dishonored who is honored by God? Do not fear... Follow your path... It will culminate in the possession of eternal glory.

2- Do not let your heart be disturbed if they say some unkind, rude, biting, offensive, etc., word to you.

Meditation for the 8th Day

1- Consider that S. Philomena, dying for the love of Jesus Christ and all the abject things of this world, entered into the joy of eternal life. Yes, I am certain, she said in her heart, that the Supreme Judge will grant me, in exchange for the passing goods I sacrifice for His love, the crown of justice that He promised me. She dies... and there she is in the tabernacle of God, with the Saints following the Lamb... Are these the thoughts I try to have when I am before some sacrifice?... What impression do the sacrifices make on my soul? Which side does the scale fall to?... Ah! The Saints, to possess everything, they said everything, they lost everything... and what shall I say?

2- Let us make some voluntary sacrifice today... Let us promptly and willingly make those that are united to our duties, etc.

Meditation for the 9th Day

1- Consider that St. Philomena, after having sacrificed everything in this miserable world for the love of Jesus Christ, received from Him, even in this world, more than a hundredfold of what she had given. How much reputation! How much power! How much glory! How much greatness humbled at her feet! What a numerous influx of pilgrims to her various shrines! How many feasts in her honor! What testimonies of veneration are bestowed upon her! Thus exactly God fulfills His promises. Oh!, if we were to keep ours with Him with equal fidelity!... But by depriving Him of His glory, do we perhaps also risk depriving ourselves of so many merits and favors, both in this world and in the next?... Courage, therefore. Be faithful, so that God may be faithful with you.

2- Today, perform some work of mercy in honor of St. Philomena. Arrange for a good confession to receive Our Lord Jesus Christ with dignity.

~ Final Prayer ~

O my God, who, among the other miracles of Your power, also granted the victory of martyrdom to these fragile beings, grant that we, celebrating the birth of Saint Philomena, Your Virgin and Martyr, through her examples, may reach You through her.

Through Our Lord Jesus Christ Your Son, in the unity of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

~ Prayer of Consecration to St. Philomena as Patroness ~

For the Feast Days of St. Philomena, to be prayed after Communion

O glorious Saint Philomena, Virgin, Martyr, spouse of Christ, glory of the Catholic Church, illustrious maker of wonders.

I, your unworthy servant and protected one, consecrate myself on this day for my entire life to your love and to your devotion.

Yes, I will always lovingly love you, and after Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I will carry you in my thoughts, and I will speak of you to all whom I can lead to love you and devote themselves to you.

You will be, after Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, the object of my affection, my joy, and my consolation.

To you, as to an intimate and dear friend, I will manifest my joys; I will seek your counsel for my

doubts, and I will turn to you for comfort and aid in my trials and sorrows.

Deign, O glorious Saint, to receive me among your number of protected ones and lovers and defend me at all times.

O my sweet Saint, dear Saint Philomena, I offer and consecrate my heart to you today.

I wish you all good and joy, to the extent that I can also contribute to your fortunate glory. In return, forgive me for my audacity, and love me so that a chain of warm and eternal affection and friendship may be established between you and me.

I will never forget you, my sweet advocate, and I ask that you remember me so that I may be your companion for eternity in Paradise. *Amen.*

Prayer of Consecration to S. Philomena

To be prayed daily after consecration

Illustrious Virgin and Martyr Saint Philomena, whose name and miracles are known to the ends of the earth.

Mercifully, I place my trust in your intercession and entrust your special protection to my family.

Obtain for me the health of soul and body, for in these days I need both.

Make me strong in word and work, so that every thought, word, and action of my life seeks the glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

🙏*Saint Philomena, pray for us.*(x3)

Chaplet of Saint Philomena

Official Version of the Archconfraternity of St. Philomena

– *Creed* (to ask for the gift of faith)

– *Our Father x3* (to thank the Most Holy Trinity for the gifts granted to the Blessed Virgin, in whose honor she gave her life)

– *Pray 13 times*:* (in honor of the 13 years she lived on earth)

> Hail, O Saint Philomena, whom I acknowledge, after Mary, as my advocate with the Divine Spouse; intercede for me now and at the hour of my death. Saint Philomena, dear daughter of Jesus and Mary, pray for us who have recourse to you. *Amen.*

***** This prayer may be substituted with 13 Hail Marys, each followed by:

"*Saint Philomena, pray for us!*"

– *Final Prayer:*

Hail, O illustrious Saint Philomena, who so courageously shed your blood for Christ. I bless the Lord for all the graces He granted you during your life, especially in your martyrdom. I praise and glorify Him for the honor and power with which He crowned you, and I ask you to obtain from God the graces I seek through your intercession (mention your request). *Amen.*

Litany to Saint Philomena

Composed by the Holy Curé of Ars, St. John Mary Baptist Vianney

Lord, *have mercy on us.*

Christ, *have mercy on us.*

Lord, *have mercy on us.*

Christ, *hear us.*

Christ, *graciously hear us.*

God the Father of Heaven, *have mercy on us.*

God the **Son**, Redeemer of the world,
have mercy on us.

God the **Holy Spirit**, *have mercy on us.*

Holy Trinity, one God, *have mercy on us.*

Holy Mary, Queen of Virgins, *pray for us.*

St. Philomena, filled with abundant graces
from your cradle, *pray for us*.

St. Philomena, faithful imitator of Mary, …

St. Philomena, victim of the love of Jesus, …

St. Philomena, model of virgins, …

St. Philomena, temple of perfect humility, …

St. Philomena, enkindled with zeal
for the glory of God, …

St. Philomena, example of strength
and perseverance, …

St. Philomena, mirror of the most heroic virtues, …

St. Philomena, firm and intrepid
in the face of torments, …

St. Philomena, scourged like your Divine Spouse, …

St. Philomena, who preferred the humiliations
of death to the splendors of a throne, …

St. Philomena, who converted the witnesses
of your martyrdom, …

St. Philomena, who wearied the fury
of your executioners, …

St. Philomena, protector of the innocent, …

St. Philomena, patroness of youth, …

St. Philomena, refuge of the unfortunate, …

St. Philomena, health of the sick and infirm, …

St. Philomena, new light of the Church militant, …

St. Philomena, who confound the impiety

of the age, …

St. Philomena, whose name is glorious in Heaven and formidable in Hell, …

St. Philomena, illustrious by the most splendid miracles, …

St. Philomena, powerful with God, …

St. Philomena, who reign in glory, …

Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world, *spare us, O Lord.*

Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world, *graciously hear us, O Lord.*

Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world, *have mercy on us.*

Pray for us, Saint Philomena, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

We implore You, O Lord, to grant us the forgiveness of our sins through the intercession of Saint Philomena, Virgin and Martyr, who was always pleasing in Your sight by her eminent purity and the practice of every virtue.

Through Jesus Christ, Our Lord, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. *Amen.*

Part II - Revelations

Discovery of St. Philomena

On **May 25, 1802**, during excavation work in the Catacombs of Priscilla in Rome, the then Vatican Archaeological Supervisor, Fr. Filippo Ludovici, inspected a cemented surface near the Greek Chapel. It was during this inspection that a tomb was discovered containing **three burial slabs** with a red hand-painted epitaph: LUMENA | PAX TE | CUM FI. Following the ancient customs of inscriptions, the epitaph was interpreted as PAX TECUM FILUMENA ("***Peace be with you, Philomena***").

The slabs displayed symbols of anchors, arrows, palms, and lilies, indicating religious meanings and possibly the manner of martyrdom of the person buried there.

The three original slabs are now showcased at the Shrine in Mugnano.

After the slabs were removed, the remains of a **young girl**, approximately **thirteen to fifteen years old**, were discovered, along with a small vial containing dried blood, likely collected at the time of her death, in accordance with Christian customs during the persecutions.

(Location in the catacombs where the slabs and the body of St. Philomena were found)

The mortal remains were carefully placed in a wooden box lined with silk and fine cotton, then transferred to the General Custody of Sacred Relics at the Vatican, where they remained reverently for three years, preserving the memory of the young martyr and her testimony of faith.

Don Francesco De Lucia, a missionary priest from *Mugnano del Cardinale*, Diocese of *Nola*, in southern Italy, known for his piety and dedication, was concerned about the influence of revolutionary ideas on his parish. He sought to acquire the relics of a martyr to strengthen the faith of his community. While visiting the General Custody in the summer of **1805**, he came across the relics of St. Philomena and set his heart on obtaining them.

Although initially disappointed by the official response denying the transfer of the relics, Don Francesco kept his faith, making a fervent promise to St. Philomena during a day of high fever. His devotion was rewarded with a sudden and miraculous cure, which deeply moved the ecclesiastical authorities. They ultimately approved the transfer of Philomena's relics to *Mugnano*, believing that the saint wished to accompany Don Francesco and perform miracles in her new parish.

The arrival of the relics in *Mugnano* on **August 10, 1805**, was marked by great celebration and devotion. A solemn procession, accompanied by over forty priests and representatives of various confraternities, paraded

through the town with honors and religious hymns. The relics were placed in the Church of *Our Lady of Grace* (*Madonna delle Grazie*), where a solemn Mass was celebrated, and they remain there to this day.

The tomb and the miraculous statue of Saint Philomena at her shrine in *Mugnano*. The saint's bones are encased within the representative statue.

Notable Devotees

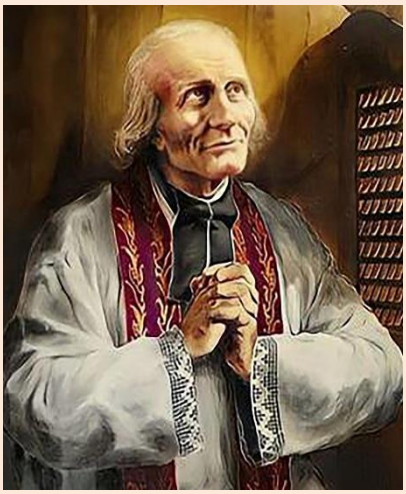
For thirty years, *Mugnano* witnessed a continuous increase in miracles attributed to St. Philomena, which led the community to petition the Holy See to establish a feast day and the celebration of offices and Masses in her honor.

In **1834, Pauline-Marie Jaricot**, founder of important social and religious institutions in France, at the age of 35, was suffering from a severe and incurable heart condition. Encouraged by her close friend, **St. John Vianney**, she decided to make a pilgrimage to Philomena's tomb in Italy, despite medical advice against it.

Moved by strong faith, she traveled to Rome to meet **Pope Gregory XVI** and requested the approval of devotion to Philomena if she were to be healed through the young martyr's intercession. The Holy Father responded positively to her plea, recognizing that such a cure, given the advanced state of her illness, would be a significant miracle.

Indeed, Pauline was miraculously healed after participating in Masses and receiving Holy Communion on **August 10, 1835**. This event, witnessed by the public, solidified devotion to St. Philomena and led the Pope to issue, on **January 30, 1837**, a decree officially establishing **August 11** as the liturgical **feast of St. Philomena**. This decree allowed for the public veneration

of the saint, initially in the Diocese of *Nola* and later in other dioceses, including Rome.



Upon returning to France, Pauline visited her dear friend, the **Holy *Curé of Ars***, to share the story of her miraculous healing, offering him part of the precious relics she had brought. **St. John Vianney** was immediately filled with fervent devotion and intense love for St. Philomena. He built a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Martyr in his church, where the sacred relics were placed.

Soon, countless cures, conversions, and miracles began to occur. The *Curé of Ars* consecrated himself to St. Philomena by a special vow, and she blessed him with apparitions where she conversed with the devout priest with touching intimacy. He affectionately referred to her as his *"dear little saint,"* his *"heavenly agent,"* and his *"Princess of Heaven."* In turn, she granted him extraordinary graces, fulfilling all his requests. To everyone who sought his advice, St. John Vianney recommended seeking Philomena's intercession. He distributed a vast number of medals of the saint, through which God performed numerous cures.

The miracle of Pauline Jaricot, the subsequent papal approval, and St. John Vianney's fervent devotion highlight the importance of St. Philomena's intercession, even in the absence of detailed historical records about

her life. The Church recognized the numerous miracles attributed to her intercession as sufficient evidence for her public veneration. This recognition reinforced the belief that devotion to St. Philomena is powerful and effective, fostering renewed faith among the faithful.

Among other great devotees of St. Philomena are **Pope Leo XII, Pope Gregory XVI, Pope Pius IX, Pope Leo XIII, Pope Pius X, St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, St. Peter Julian Eymard, Blessed Bartolo Longo, St. John Neumann, and St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina**.

Life of Saint Philomena

There are no known documents detailing the life of Saint Philomena beyond the drawings, inscriptions, and objects discovered in her tomb in the catacombs of Rome. The lack of concrete information did not diminish the devotion of the faithful, who continuously prayed for revelations about her life and her sufferings for the love of Christ.

The devotees of Saint Philomena, eager to know more about the young martyr, saw their prayers answered through revelations given to Mother Maria Luisa of Jesus (1799–1875), a Dominican tertiary and founder of the *Order of the Oblates of Our Lady of Sorrows*.

According to the revelations received by the religious sister, Philomena was a beautiful princess from the Greek island of *Corfu*, born approximately on **January 10, 290 AD**.

On **August 3, 1833**, while praying before an image of Saint Philomena, Mother Maria Luisa was seized by a strong desire to discover the true date of the saint's martyrdom. During her prayer, she experienced a vision in which she heard a gentle and soft voice coming from the direction of the image. This voice provided her with detailed information about the life and suffering of Saint Philomena.

This revelation not only satisfied her curiosity but also strengthened the devotion and public recognition of Philomena as a dedicated martyr:

"My dear sister, I am the daughter of a prince who ruled over a small city-state in Greece. My mother was also of royal blood. My parents had no children. They were idolaters, continually offering sacrifices and prayers to false gods.

A doctor from Rome, named Publius, lived in the palace in service to my father. This doctor professed Christianity. Seeing the affliction of my parents, he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to speak to them about Christianity and promised

to pray for them if they consented to receive Baptism.

The grace that accompanied his words illuminated their reason and triumphed over their wills. They became Christians and obtained the long-desired happiness that Publius had assured them would be the reward of their conversion.

At the moment of my birth, they gave me the name 'Lumena', as a reference to the light of faith that I had brought to them. On the day of my Baptism, they called me 'Philomena', or 'Daughter of Light', because on that day, I was born into the Faith.

The affection my parents had for me was so great that they always kept me by their side. Because of this, they took me to Rome on a journey my father was compelled to make due to an unjust war in which he was being threatened by the arrogant emperor Diocletian. At that time, I was 13 years old. We were brought to the Emperor's palace and granted an audience.

As soon as Diocletian saw me, his eyes became fixed on me. He appeared to be disturbed by this throughout the time my father spoke with great emotion, saying everything he could in his defense. As soon as my father finished speaking, the emperor told him not to worry anymore, to banish all fear, and to think only of living in happiness.

These were the Emperor's words: **'I will place at your disposal all the power of the Empire. I ask for only one thing — the hand of your daughter.'**

My father, dazzled by an honor far beyond anything he could

have ever expected, freely and instantly agreed to the Emperor's proposal. When we returned home, my parents did everything they could to persuade me to yield to the will of Diocletian and their own.

I cried and said: **'Do you wish me to break the promise I made to Jesus Christ for the love of a man? My virginity belongs to Him. I can no longer give it away.'**

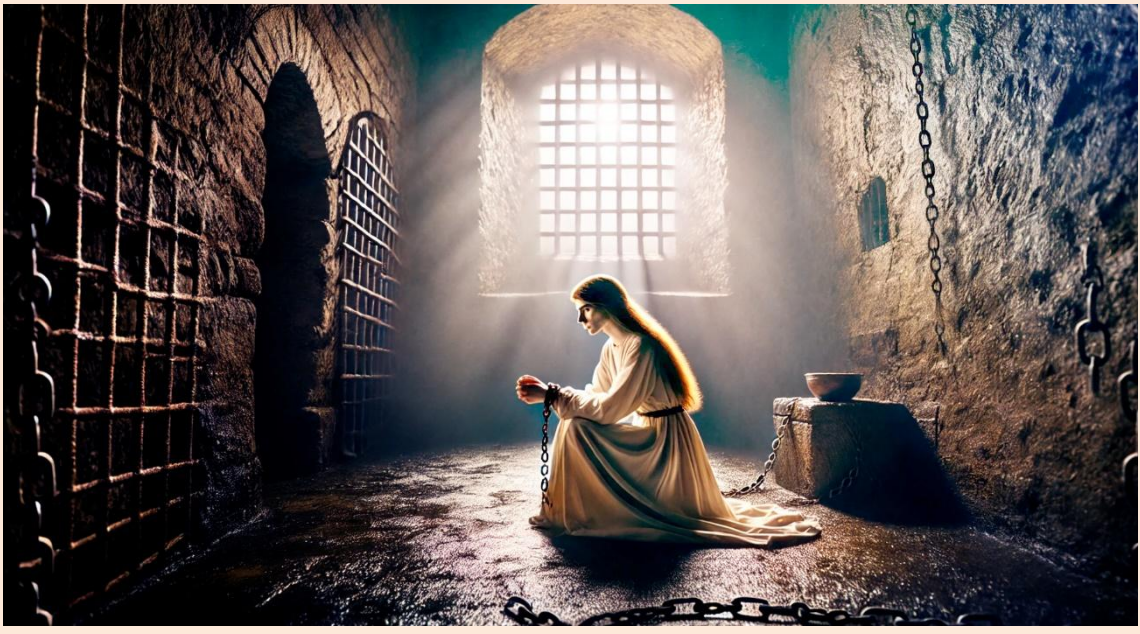
'But you are too young, far too young to have made such a commitment,' my father replied. He added the most terrifying threats to the order he had given me to accept Diocletian's hand. The grace of my God made me invincible, and my father, unable to dissuade the Emperor to release him from the promise he had made, was forced by Diocletian to bring me into the Emperor's presence.

I had to endure for some time the fury of my father. My mother, joining her efforts to his, resolved to do whatever was necessary to weaken my resolve. Affection, threats —

everything was employed to reduce me to submission. I even saw both of them fall to their knees before me, saying with tears in their eyes: **'My child, have pity on your father, your mother, your country, our homeland, and our people.'**

'No! No,' I replied. **'My virginity, which I have consecrated to God, comes before everything — before you, before my country. My kingdom is Heaven.'**

My words plunged them into despair, and they brought me before the emperor, who, in his turn, did everything he could to overcome my resistance. However, his promises, his seductions, and his threats were equally in vain. Overcome by sudden rage and influenced by the Devil, he cast me into one of the palace prisons, where he kept me bound in chains.



Thinking that pain and shame would weaken the courage with which my Divine Spouse had inspired me, he came to see me every day. After several days, the emperor gave orders for my chains to be loosened so that I could take a

small portion of bread and water.

He renewed his assaults, some of which would have been fatal to my purity had it not been for the grace of God. The defeats he suffered were always preludes to new tortures for me. Prayer was my sustenance. I never ceased to commend myself to Jesus and His most pure Mother. My imprisonment had already lasted **37 days** when, in the midst of a heavenly light, I saw Mary holding the Divine Child in her arms.

'My daughter,' she said, **'after three more days of imprisonment, you will leave this state of suffering after 40 days.'** This good news made my heart leap with joy. But the Queen of Angels added that I would leave my prison only to endure, in terrifying torments, a far more dreadful battle than those I had faced before. I instantly fell from joy into the most cruel anguish; I thought it would kill me.

'Have courage, my child,' said Our Lady, **'are you not aware of the special love I hold for you? The name you received at Baptism is your assurance, for its resemblance to the name of my Son and to mine. You are called Lumena, just as your Spouse is called Light, Star, Sun, and as I am called Dawn, Star, Moon in her splendor, and Sun. Do not be afraid; I will help you. Nature, which now humbles you, enforces its laws. At the moment of the battle, Grace will come to lend you its strength. Your angel, who was also mine — Gabriel, whose name means strength — will come to your aid. I will commend you especially to his care, as the beloved of my children.'**

These words from the Queen of Virgins gave me courage once again, and the vision disappeared, leaving the prison filled with a heavenly fragrance. I experienced a joy beyond this world, something indescribable.

What the Queen of Angels had prepared me for was soon experienced. Diocletian, desperate to break my resolve, decided to impose a public punishment that would disgrace my virtue.

He condemned me to be stripped and scourged, like the Spouse whom I had chosen over him. These were his horrifying words:

'Since she is not ashamed to prefer, over an emperor like me, a criminal condemned to an infamous death by his own people, she deserves that my justice treat her as he was treated.'

The prison guards hesitated to strip me completely, but they tied me to a column in the presence of a high-ranking man of the court. They whipped me violently until I was bathed in blood.

My entire body seemed like a single open wound, but I did not succumb. The tyrant dragged me back to the prison, expecting me to die. I was prepared to join my Divine Spouse.

In the darkness, two angels, radiant with light, appeared. They poured a comforting balm over my wounds, restoring me with a strength I had not possessed even before the torture.

When the emperor was informed of the change that had taken place in me, he summoned me. He looked at me and was astonished. He tried to persuade me that I owed my healing and renewed vigor to Jupiter, another god whom he, the emperor, had sent to me. He attempted to impress upon me his belief that Jupiter desired me to become the Empress of Rome. Adding to these seductive words promises of great honors, including the most flattering compliments, Diocletian tried to win me over. He attempted, in a friendly manner, to complete the work of Hell that he had begun.

The Divine Spirit, to whom I owe my steadfastness in preserving my purity, seemed to fill me with light and knowledge. None of the proofs I gave regarding the solidity of our Faith could be refuted by Diocletian or his courtiers.

Then, in his imperial madness, he ordered a guard to tie an anchor around my neck and cast me into the waters of the Tiber River. The order was carried out.

I was thrown into the water, but God sent me two angels who untied me from the anchor. The angels gently carried me, in full view of the crowd, to the riverbank. I emerged unharmed, despite being submerged along with the heavy anchor.

This miracle had a powerful effect on many of the spectators, and a great number of them converted to the faith. However, Diocletian attributed my preservation to secret magic.

Then, the emperor ordered that I be dragged through the streets of Rome and shot with a volley of arrows. My blood flowed, but I did not lose heart. Diocletian believed I was about to die and commanded the guards to take me back to the prison.

Once again, Heaven honored me with another favor. I fell into a sweet sleep, and when I awoke, I found myself perfectly healed.

When Diocletian heard of this, he shouted angrily, '**Very well then, let her be pierced with sharp arrows a second time, and let her die during the torture.**'

Once more, the archers drew their bows. They summoned all their strength, but the arrows refused to follow their intended course. The emperor was present. Enraged, he called me a sorceress.

Believing that the power of fire could break the supposed enchantment, he ordered the arrows to be heated in a furnace and aimed at my heart.

His order was obeyed, but the arrows, after traveling part of the distance toward me, changed direction and returned to strike those who had shot them. Six of the archers were killed by their own arrows.

Many among them renounced paganism, and the people began to give public testimony to the power of God, who had protected me. These murmurs and acclamations enraged the tyrant. He commanded that my death be hastened, ordering that I be beheaded.

My soul took flight toward my heavenly Spouse, who placed me, with the crown of virginity and the palm of martyrdom, in a place of distinction among the elect.

The day that was so joyful for me and saw me enter into glory was a **Friday**, and the hour of my death was the **third hour after midday** — the same hour in which my Divine Master breathed His last.

The account of the life of St. Philomena is taken from the work of Fr. Francesco di Lucia, titled *"Relazione Istorica di Santa Filomena"*, based on the locutions received by Sister Maria Luisa of Jesus in August 1833. These accounts were granted the *imprimatur* by the then Holy Office (now the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) on December 21, 1833.

Other Revelations

Sister Maria Luisa of Jesus was also privileged to receive additional revelations concerning St. Philomena and to behold her in beautiful apparitions.

– When asked, at the request of a priest, if she had received Holy Communion, the Holy Martyr replied that after her First Communion, at the **age of five**, she continued to receive Communion daily until she went to Rome.

– On another occasion, while kneeling before the altar and sympathizing with the suffering of St. Philomena at her beheading, the saint told her to meditate on and sympathize with the Passion of the Redeemer, for only He suffered intensely. "I suffered little," she added, "because Jesus Christ suffered for us."

The sister, enraptured in ecstasy, saw the step of the altar bathed in the warm blood of St. Philomena, where her exquisitely beautiful head leapt, proclaiming with a smile: "Glory to Jesus! Glory to Jesus!"

She then experienced an ardent desire to share the same fate as the martyrs, contemplating the grace Jesus Christ granted them.

– On another occasion, St. Philomena told her that, when she was cast into the Tiber, she thought the hour of her death had come and embraced the anchor as Jesus had embraced the Cross. But seeing that she was not satisfied with offering Him just one life, and that she

would have willingly offered a thousand lives for His love, the Lord preserved her from death in the Tiber and granted her as much glory as if she had truly sacrificed a thousand lives for Him.

– One day, as Sister Maria Luisa implored St. Philomena to thank the Lord for a grace He had granted her through extraordinary means, the sweet martyr replied that she would do so and instructed her to recite **three *Glory Be*** prayers in thanksgiving to the Most Holy Trinity. She explained that the Lord had granted her a **three-hour ecstasy** when, during the moment when the arrows could not be shot from the bows, she exclaimed: "Lord, how truly You are the strong shield of Your servants!"

At that moment, she had not seen the death of the archers and, upon regaining her senses amidst the commotion of the crowd, was suddenly beheaded.

– One evening, Sister Maria Luisa asked St. Philomena to teach her a devotion particularly dear to her. She heard an inner voice saying: "Pray three Creeds: one for the perseverance of the just, another for the conversion of sinners, and the third for heretics and unbelievers."

She followed this instruction. However, the next evening, feeling very sleepy, she began to doubt whether the inner voice was truly inspired by the saint or just her own imagination. The moment she had this thought, she experienced a sudden interior recollection and saw Heaven open before her.

A majestic throne of gold adorned with precious stones

appeared, with someone seated upon it, clothed in the brilliance of the sun and with a face so radiant that she could not bear to look upon it. White clouds surrounded the throne, and many virgins sat around it, all seemingly dressed in rays of sunlight. These virgins would rise to place their crowns before the throne whenever someone prayed to them, and then they would sit again.

Sister Maria Luisa began praying the **first Creed**. She saw her angel take a red flower from her lips and fly to Heaven, presenting it to St. Philomena. The saint stood and prayed for the **perseverance of the just**.

She then prayed the **second Creed**, and St. Philomena prayed for the **conversion of sinners**.

But when she prayed the **third Creed**, the fragrance of the flower carried upward, and St. Philomena's prayer **for heretics and unbelievers** became so fervent that it seemed her voice resounded throughout the earth. Her voice was not human but resembled the harmonious sound of thunder, as if countless instruments were playing together. She said: "Lord, enlighten those who lie in darkness and in the shadow of death. Lord, my blood has been poured out upon the earth; do not allow it to be trampled underfoot by unbelievers. O Lord, this grace is asked of You by Philomena, whose special mission is to illuminate. Lord, enlighten those who lie in darkness and in the shadow of death."

Then, from the clouds surrounding the throne, a voice was heard saying: "For all who wish to benefit from it."

The Cord of Saint Philomena

The devotion to the Cord of St. Philomena arose spontaneously due to countless testimonies of graces received through its use. Pope *Leo XIII*, who was also a devotee of the saint, officially recognized the practice, approved the wearing of the cord, and granted indulgences to the faithful who wore it. Another great promoter of this devotion was the Holy *Curé of Ars*, who reported receiving graces through this sacramental and encouraged everyone to adopt this pious practice.

The Cord of St. Philomena is made with interwoven threads of linen, wool, or cotton in white and red, symbolizing the saint's virginity and martyrdom, with two knots at one end. It can be worn as a belt under clothing or as a bracelet on the wrist. While anyone can produce the cord, it must be blessed by an authorized priest according to the formula in the Roman Ritual.

It is customary for devotees to recite this prayer daily:

> **Saint Philomena, Virgin and Martyr, pray for us so that, through your powerful intercession, we may obtain purity of soul and heart, which leads to the perfect love of God.** *Amen.*

🪔 The Oil of Saint Philomena

On the eighth day after the arrival of St. Philomena's relics in *Mugnano del Cardinale*, the first of countless miracles related to the oil of the lamp that illuminated her body occurred. A woman anointed her blind daughter's eyes with the oil, and the child instantly regained her sight, to the amazement of all present. Since then, this sacramental has been sought by devotees as a source of help for both physical and spiritual ailments.

Every year, on the first Sunday after Philomena's birthday (January 10), the *"Annual Blessing of the Oil"* is held at the Shrine. Pilgrims from various parts of the world participate in the procession, bringing oil to be blessed in a ceremony presided over by the Bishop of *Nola* and the Shrine's Rector. The oil, distributed in red containers with inscriptions in Italian, is made available exclusively through the Official Centers of the Universal *Archconfraternity of Saint Philomena*.

Dates of Devotion to St. Philomena

- **January 10**: Birth of St. Philomena.
- **1st Sunday after January 10**: Patronage of St. Philomena.
- **May 25**: Discovery of St. Philomena's body in the Catacombs of Priscilla in Rome.
- **August 10**: Celebration of the translation of her body and her martyrdom (at 3 PM).
- **August 11**: Liturgical Feast of St. Philomena.
- **August 13**: Celebration of the name of St. Philomena.

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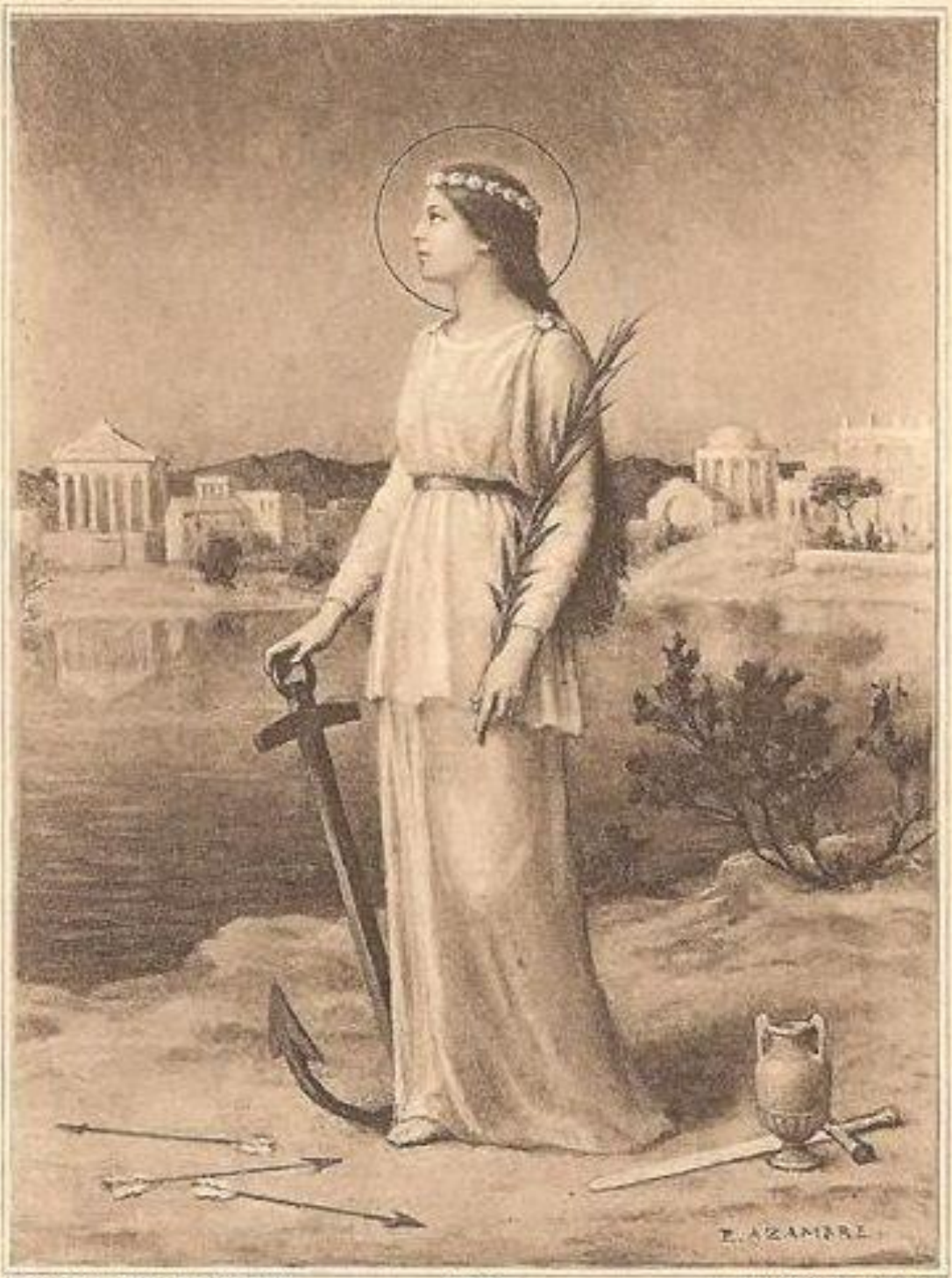
Saint Philomena, Pray for Us!



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SAINTE PHILOMÈNE

Vierge et Martyre

PAX TECUM FILUMENA